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Here Comes Santa Clause

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Jaiden Kendell
Logan, Utah
November 2017

Here Comes Santa Clause Calendar Custom

Informant

Jaiden Kendell was born in Oregon, raised in Lubbock, Texas, and now attends Utah State University in Logan, Utah. Her family lives in Alpine, Utah. She is 21 years old and is a junior studying Public Relations with a minor in Biology. She is the 3rd of 5 children in her family and has 2 brothers and 2 sisters. She loves to play tennis. She is my co-worker; we work for Utah State's Campus Recreation program.

Context

I interviewed Jaiden at the front desk of Utah State's HPER Building (Health, Physical Education, and Recreation) during a shift. The building was almost completely empty because it was a Saturday afternoon and no students were on campus. We were the only 2 people at the desk. We were both on our computers and chatting to kill time. She was playing around with her swivel chair and had to speak up a little to be heard over the noise of a load of towels in our industrial washing machine. We were sitting only a few feet away from each other. Jaiden said "Santa Clause" always visits the house where they have their annual family Christmas Eve party. This event rotates amongst her mom's siblings' houses, who all live in Utah County. "Santa Clause" visits after everybody opens Christmas pajamas and puts them on, and right before everybody leaves to go home. He bursts in the front door and grabs a kitchen chair and sits by the Christmas tree in the living room. He usually stays about an hour, and everybody usually disperses around 10 PM. Every single member of the family takes a turn sitting on Santa's lap, regardless of age or relation. Every family member receives an unwrapped present from Santa, too. Jaiden mentioned that there have been a few years when her uncle or cousin dressed up instead of her grandpa, and they didn't do as good of a job. There have also been a few years when Santa didn't come at all because there weren't as many family members present. One year, her family didn't travel from Texas to Utah for Christmas, and she simply missed out on the extra present that year. Overall, this is a tradition she expects to happen on Christmas Eve night every year.

Text

My grandpa, on my mom's side again, when we're all together- which is most years- umm, he always dresses up as Santa Clause. Ever since I was, like, really little I remember him dressing up as Santa, and he comes in with this big red bag with presents for all of the cousins and it's fun.

Texture

Jaiden told me about this tradition with a little bit of embarrassment. She said that it has been happening since her oldest cousins were born and she always looked forward to it as a little kid. Now that she's older, she thinks it's funny that everybody in her family plays along and sits on Santa's lap. She also laughed and admitted that nowadays she mostly just looks forward to the extra present. Her attitude suggested that she thinks it's sort of a silly tradition and she feels a little dumb pretending to talk to Santa and sit on his lap. She likes seeing her little cousins' excitement though. The atmosphere during the tradition is always loud and excited. Parents often get emotional and nostalgic as they watch their kids and younger siblings interact with "Santa". Everybody talks at the same time and plays with their present and is excited for the next day (Christmas). Jaiden says she is usually a pretty enthusiastic participant, even though she is getting older.

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Utah State University
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Dr. Lynne S. McNeill
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